

We Claim:

~~Sub A~~ 1. In a network having a host electronic device and a plurality of storage devices with storage mediums, a method, comprising the steps of:

5 providing a plurality of controllers interfaced with said network that control access to said storage devices; and

10 providing a virtual interface on said host electronic device for interfacing between a user of said host electronic device and said plurality of storage devices, with said virtual interface,

15 receiving user data read requests and write requests from said user;

20 translating said user data read requests and write requests into destination read requests and destination write requests in a manner that is transparent to the user; and

25 sending destination data read requests and write requests to at least one of said plurality of controllers for execution.

2. The method of claim 1 comprising the further steps of:

30 sending data from a user at said host electronic device to said virtual interface;

35 sending data from said virtual interface to a controller for a selected one of said plurality of storage devices; and

40 sending data from said controller to a selected one of said storage mediums for storage on said selected storage medium.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein said user is a database.

4. The method of claim 2 wherein said user is a file system.

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5. In a network having a host electronic device and a plurality of storage devices with storage mediums, said storage mediums accessed via at least one of a plurality of controllers interfaced with said network, a method, comprising the steps of:

- providing a virtual interface on said host electronic device for interfacing
- 5 between a user of said host electronic device and said plurality of storage devices, with said virtual interface,
- receiving user data read requests and write requests from said user;
- translating said user data read requests and write requests into
- 10 destination read requests and destination write requests in a manner that is transparent to the user; and
- sending destination data read requests and write requests to at least one of said plurality of controllers for execution;
- sending data from a user at said host electronic device to said virtual
- 15 interface;
- sending data from said virtual interface to a RAID (Redundant Array of Independent/Inexpensive Disk)volume controller for a RAID set; and
- sending data from said RAID volume controller to said RAID set.

20 6. The method of claim 5 wherein said RAID set includes a first side and a second side and wherein parity data is sent to the first side of said RAID set and a full copy of said data is sent to the second side of said RAID set by said RAID volume controller.

25 7. The method of claim 5 wherein a complete copy of said data is sent to the first side and the second side of said RAID set.

8. The method of claim 5 wherein said data is striped among more than one disk of said RAID set.

30 9. The method of claim 5 wherein said RAID volume controller stores data on RAID sets with different RAID levels.

10. The method of claim 5 comprising the further step of:

- providing a plurality of RAID sets; and
- 35 moving said data from a first RAID set to a second RAID set based on a command from said virtual interface.

18. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein said software facility copies said data to a different storage medium in response to a request from a user of said electronic device.

19. In an electronic device interfaced with a network, said network interfaced with a plurality of devices with storage mediums located thereon, a medium holding computer-executable instructions for a method, said method comprising the steps of:
 providing a software facility located on said electronic device, said software facility creating a virtual interface; and
 allocating data transparently to said plurality of devices for storage using
10 said virtual interface.

20. The medium of claim 19 wherein said method comprises the further steps of:
 detecting a failure in one of said plurality of devices holding said data;
and
15 automatically allocating a copy of said data to a different one of said plurality of devices for storage.

21. The medium of claim 19 wherein said method comprises the further step of:
 allocating a copy of said data to a different one of said plurality of
20 devices for storage in response to a request from a user of said electronic device.

22. In a network, a method, comprising the steps of:
 wrapping a network storage medium inside a virtual logical unit, said virtual logical unit being a software created virtual interface encapsulating and hiding
25 the location of said network storage medium;
 placing said virtual logical unit between said network storage medium and an electronic device; and
 accessing data on said network storage medium through data read
 requests and data write requests sent from said electronic device to said virtual logical
30 unit.